Plans to Boost Fruits Export

3550. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the plans to boost fruit exports; and

(b) the measures taken in collaboration with Agriculture production Export Development Agency to plan for increasing export of eggs & mangoes from Andhra Pradesh where they are in excess?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEDGE): (a) and (b) Steps taken to enhance production and boost exports of horticultural products including mangoes and eggs throughout India including the State of Andhra Pradesh with the help of the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) etc, interalia, include:—

(i) Providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality planting material, upgradation of technical knowhow of farmers through demonstrations, trainings and publicity, rejuvenation of old orchards, area expansion, supply of minikits for vegetables, improving productivity and training of farmers under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Integrated Development of Tropical, Temperate and Arid Zone fruits;

(ii) Provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipment;

(iii) Providing financial assistance to exporters/growers/Cooperative Societies for development of infrastructural facilities such as purchase of specialised transpsort units, establishment of pre cooling/cold storage facilities. integrated post-harvest handling systems (pack houses);

(iv) Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging, and strengthening of quality control including installation of latest/ ISO 9000/HACCP equipments at export units;

(v) Establishment of vappor heat treatment facilities for improving the acceptability of the product especially mangoes in overseas markets. Research efforts are on for the use of modern technologies such as Controlled/ Modified Atmosphere technologies in transportation for increasing the shelf-life of perishable products;

(vi) Grant of Air Freight Subsidy for exports of selected fresh vegetables and fruits and hatcing eggs;

(vii) Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and mango festivals and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions;

(viii) Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

(ix) providing technical advisory services and other support services to, trade and industry including training of farmers for export production, quality control packaging, transport etc.

Convention of IPRs

3551. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMA CHANDRAN REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India would join Paris Convention on Intellectual Property Rights; and

(b) the advantage, India will get from the convention?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) The matter is under consideration of the Government.

Opening of Commercial offices in Pakistan

3552. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of commercial offices opened by the Government in Pakistan for promoting greater trade with that country;

(b) the number of personnel in these offices and their professional background; and

(c) whether there is any impediment placed by the Pakistan authorities in the smooth operation of these commercial offices?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) No separate commercial office has been opened by the Government of India in Pakistan. However, a Commercial Wing exists in the High Commission of India, Islamabad. This is headed by a Counsellor with consideration commercial experience in other Indian Missions earlier. He is assisted by a PA, assistant and LDC.

(c) The major impediment in the smooth functioning of the Commercial Wing is the reluctance of the Pakistani authorities to interact with the Commercial Wing and harassment by the Pakistani Intelligence agencies of the businessmen getting in touch with the Commercial Wing.

Projections by STC

3553. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether State Trading Corporation's projections for the current year has sharply come down;

(b) the total loss incurred by STC on fake import and export deals in the recent past years;

(c) the reasons therefore; and

(d) the remedial steps in details taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir. During the current financial year, the total turnover of the State Trading Corporation of India Ltd. has been projected at the level of Rs. 3300 crores as compared to the achieved turnover of Rs. 2878 crores during 1997-98 which envisages an increases by 15%.

(b) The Corporation has intimated that it has not entered into any fake import and export deals. It has been earning net profits every year since its inception.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Export of Agricultural Products

3554. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to boost export of certain agriculture products and farm goods;

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard; and

(c) the target set up for exports of agriculture products this year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The policy of the government to permit exports of agricultural products and farm goods is governed principally by the